ATTENDANCE POLICY

COLLEGE TOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Statutory	NO
Adopted from Bracknell Forest	NO

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This School's Attendance Policy is set in consideration and consequence of the provisions of the following;

- ***The Education Act 1996***
- ***The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended by The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013***
- ***The Education (Penalty Notice) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended by The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 and The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013***
- ***Department For Education Guidance as from time to time issued in respect of school attendance matters***

Introduction

All children of compulsory school age have the right to an efficient full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special needs s/he may have. The Education Act of 1996 states that a parent is responsible for ensuring their child attends regularly and punctually. Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them.

The Court has determined that "Regular" attendance means that which is *"in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school" (Isle of Wight Council -v- Platt (6th April 2017) [Supreme Court] [2017] UKSC 28 (on appeal from [2016] EWHC 1283 (Admin).*

College Town Primary School takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils. It acknowledges that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school.

Aims of this policy

Parents, guardians and carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the school's policy concerning required attendance and with regard to the authorised and unauthorised absences of its pupils. This document details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance. The Governing Body has an appointed a governor to oversee safeguarding and attendance matters fall into this remit.

Absence

This school expects its Pupils to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there are good reasons for the absence and the absence is authorised.

There are two main categories of absence:

Authorised absence is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification of the absence, or given approval in advance for the absence.

Unauthorised absence is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence after a parent's request.

Please be aware that when a parent telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised. Your child's current

and previous school attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result the absence may not be authorised.

Keeping your child off school with a minor ailment such as headache or cold is not acceptable. Repeated absence will require us to request that you obtain evidence from your doctor's surgery, such as a stamped appointment card or a prescription. Please note that the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for this information and will not be liable for the cost.

School Practice:

In line with the Government and Local Authority guidelines

- Registers are taken twice daily. In the morning and in the afternoon.
- Parents, guardians or carers should always telephone or email the school office before 9.30am if their child will not be attending school.
- Text messages are sent by the School Office if the school has been given no prior notification of a pupil' absence. This will be followed with a telephone call from the Welfare & Attendance Lead when there is no response to the initial text message.
- If there is no response to either text message or telephone call by 11.30am, a staff member may visit your home. If your child's absence is considered a cause for greater concern, the Police may be notified.
- Staff will bring to the attention of the Headteacher those pupils who are seen to be developing a pattern of absence.
- The Headteacher will write to the parents, guardians or carers of those children whose attendance is a cause for concern.
- Parents, guardians or carers may be asked to meet with the Headteacher to discuss absences.
- Should absences persist with no improvement then the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

A child who arrives after the taking of the register is marked as late and the reason given. The number of minutes they are late are recorded when punctuality is a cause for concern.

A child who arrives after the registers close at 9.30am is marked as absent (U) in the register.

Registers are checked regularly and where there is an unexplained absence, a written request will be sent for an explanation.

After three weeks, the absence will be marked as unauthorised if no reason is provided.

Monthly analysis of absenteeism will be carried out and letters may be sent to parents if attendance falls below expected levels.

If attendance does not improve, parents may be called in to discuss the matter with the Headteacher and/ or Welfare and Attendance Lead.

Further absence may result in referral to the Education Welfare Service and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution. If the school decides to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice, the Bracknell Forest Code of Conduct & Protocol for the Issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices will be followed.

Lateness

Parents and carers are expected to bring their child to school on time. A child arriving after registration i.e. after 8.50a.m is disruptive for the class and embarrassing for the child. Vital information is given at the start of the school day and the child's learning may be affected if he/she is not present for the full session. Punctuality is an important life skill. Persistent lateness will be followed up by the school and may be referred to the Education Welfare Service if it continues.

A pupil arriving late:

- Should enter the building through the main entrance and report to the school office.
- Will have their name entered in the late register with the reason for the late arrival.
- Will be sent or taken to their classroom.
- May be required to make up the time lost

Parents are not permitted to take their child to the classroom as this disrupts teaching. If the arrival at school is after the registers have closed (9.30am), the pupil will receive a 'U'. This equates to an absence although we are aware that the pupil is on the school premises in accordance with health and safety requirements.

If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments should be made outside of school hours or during school holidays. You may be asked for proof of the appointment.

Term Time Leave of Absence

At College Town Primary & Nursery School we believe term time absences should be actively discouraged. Our purpose is to ensure that your child achieves to their full potential and there is a clear link between poor attendance and underachievement.

However, we recognise that there may be occasions where a parent considers there are extenuating or compassionate reasons for such absence. As outlined in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, the Headteacher will decide if the circumstances are "exceptional" and thus whether or not the absence will be "authorised".

Parent Action

Parents must request leave as far in advance as possible, giving at least 2 weeks notice where circumstances allow.

The request, to be made by the parent with whom the child normally resides, must be made in writing using the "Application for Leave of Absence During Term Time" form available from the school office.

The request must include the reason why it is felt necessary to take leave during term time (the "exceptional" circumstances).

- Leave of absence will only be granted where the Headteacher considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances'. Parent will be informed by letter within 7 school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised.

School Action

On receipt, the Head Teacher of the school, or such person as duly authorised by the Headteacher to do so on their behalf, will consider the submitted application for leave of absence during term time and will take in to account the/any reason as given by the parent for seeking such leave of absence ahead of deciding

whether or not such given reasons are, in their view, "exceptional" to merit the granting such leave of absence during term time.

The parent who submitted the application for leave of absence during term time will be notified by the school within 5 working day of the school's decision in response to the application.

Term time absence taken without authorisation may, where the criteria for doing so is met, be referred by the School to the Educational Welfare Service.

Referral may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued in accordance with Bracknell Forest Council's *"Code of Conduct and Protocol For The Issuing Of Fixed Penalty Notices".*

As a school we agree and endorse Bracknell Forest Council's "Code Of Conduct and Protocol For The Issuing Of Fixed Penalty Notices (Revised June 2017).

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice may be issued to each parent for each child. THE RATE PER PARENT PER CHILD WILL BE £60 IF PAID WITHIN 21 DAYS AND RISING TO £120 IF PAID BETWEEN 22 AND 28 DAYS.

If an issued Fixed Penalty Notice is not paid within the prescribed time limit for payment, each parent may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates' Court for an offence contrary to Section 444 Education Act 1996, (failure to secure regular attendance at school of a registered pupil of compulsory school age), in the same way as if the Fixed Penalty Notice had never been issued.

The purpose of the Fixed Penalty Notice, where it is considered appropriate for such Notice to be issued, is to give a parent the time limited opportunity to avoid prosecution for a substantive offence contrary to Section 444 Education 1996. Any such prosecution following non payment of an issued Fixed Penalty Notice will be for a substantive offence contrary to S. 444 Education Act 1996, rather than for non payment of an issued Fixed Penalty Notice.

Prosecution for the substantive offence, if proved, may, in respect of the less serious offence contrary to S. 444(1) Education Act 1996 (being the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to regularly attend school), result in each such parent receiving a criminal conviction and /or Sentence by way of a Fine not exceeding £1,000.00.

Prosecution for the substantive offence, if proved, may, in respect of the more serious offence contrary to S. 444 (1A) Education Act 1996 (where the parent knows that the child is failing to attend regularly at the school and the parent fails without reasonable justification to cause that child to regularly attend school), result in each such parent receiving a criminal conviction and / or Sentence by way of a Fine not exceeding £2,500.00 and / or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months, or else any such community based Sentence as deemed appropriate by the Court.

In addition, in all cases where one of the substantive offences is proved, the Prosecution will seek an Order for the Defendant to pay a contribution towards the Prosecution Costs of the case, including investigation costs, the application for which will be served upon the Defendants at the time of the relevant Court proceedings.

In addition, when a Court passes a sentence, it must also order that the relevant "Victim Surcharge" be paid by Defendants. Revenue raised from the Victim Surcharge is used by Central Government to fund victim of crime services through the "Victim and General Fund". The amount of the Victim Surcharge to be paid by Defendants depends on the type of Sentence imposed and, in the case of an adult offender receiving the

maximum level of Sentence applicable for the type offences covered by this Attendance Policy, may result in a Victim Surcharge of up to £170.00 per Defendant / parent.

In addition to any other Sentence imposed, the Court has the ancillary power to impose a “Parenting Order”, not exceeding 12 months in duration, on parents, where the Court considers such an Order appropriate. Any person found guilty of failing without reasonable excuse to comply with the requirement of a “Parenting Order” or with a direction of the nominated Responsible Officer in respect of it is liable to Breach proceedings and, in the event of conviction for the same, to a fine, not exceeding £1,000,00, and or any other non-imprisonable Sentencing option available to the Court in such case.

Authorisation for term time leave will not to given for the following reasons:

- Availability or cost.
- Extended holiday at the beginning or end of the term.
- A term-time booking made in error by the parent or another person.

Any absence that has not been authorised may be referred to the Education Welfare Service and, where the criteria for doing so is met, may result in prosecution proceedings or a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued per parent per child

There are 190 school days (380 sessions) a year which every child is expected to attend. There are also approximately 71 days (142 sessions) of school holidays. Parents should ensure that family holidays are taken during school holiday periods only.

The role of the school management

Pupils learn best when parents and staff work in partnership to maximise pupils' attendance at school and everyone is clear of expectations and procedures. We expect that as soon as your child starts their education at College Town Primary School, you will abide by our attendance policy.

The staff at College Town Primary School has an obligation to enquire and challenge the reasons for pupils' absences and/or lateness and do insist on written evidence for any such absences. There is also an expectation that the staff report concerns over absence and lateness to the Headteacher.

The school may send letters to parents, guardians or carers as to their child's current attendance level, unexplained absences or lateness or any other concerns.

The school collects information daily and weekly from the registers on absences.

The role of the Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare Service strives to support schools, parents and pupils with the aim of ensuring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. However, the Education Welfare Service also has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to pursue non-school attendance and persistent lateness.

Section 444 of the Education Act states that "if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parents are guilty of an offence".

Bracknell Forest Council, through the Education Welfare Service, may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecute parents when children do not attend school regularly.

A Fixed Penalty Notice when requested by a Headteacher can be issued as long as the evidence for the request is robust and the following criteria are met:-

- Where there is a minimum of 10 school sessions of unauthorised absence (5 school days) in any 10 week period (these do not need to be consecutive)
- Where term time leave is taken without obtaining authorisation from the school
- Unwarranted delayed return from term time leave without authorisation
- Persistent late arrival after the register has closed (U code) on 10 or more occasions in a 10 week period
- Parents' or carers' failure to make arrangements to ensure that children who have been excluded from school are not in a public place at prescribed times during the first five school days of any exclusion, without reasonable justification*

*It is incumbent upon the parent(s) in such circumstances to provide proof of reasonable justification, for example, that the child or young person needed to attend a pre-arranged medical appointment, or a medical emergency requiring the child to be supervised elsewhere then at home.

A Penalty Notice will be issued on the first occasion if appropriate.

When a pupil is referred to the Education Welfare Service because of persistent poor attendance there are various actions that can be taken to try to bring about an improvement. The Fast Track Intervention framework promotes early intervention and aims to ensure that appropriate action is taken to tackle non-attendance as soon as attendance problems become apparent. Fast Track involves engaging the parent in specifying what improvements need to be made over a fixed time-frame (usually 8 weeks). Parents have the responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly. Where a parent fails in this responsibility and no improvement is brought about within the specified time frame, legal proceedings may be initiated in the Magistrates' Court.

Promoting Good Attendance

We celebrate excellent attendance throughout our school, by the following actions:

- certificates are awarded to individual children who gain 100% attendance
- In assemblies we award classes where there is consistent high attendance
- the school awards Sam the dog to the winning class each week.

What parents can do to help

Please work with the school staff and ensure you are fully aware of the school's attendance policy as this has a huge impact on a pupils learning.

Parents must:

- not condone your child's absences
- telephone the school each day that your child is unable to attend school due to illness
- send a written note to the school when your child returns
- avoid appointments during the school day.

If parents, guardians or carers are worried about their child's attendance at school they should:

- talk to their child; it may be something simple that needs your help in resolving
- talk to your child's class teacher in the first instance.

The role of the Governing Body:

It is the Governors legal responsibility to monitor and evaluate the attendance in their school. The school's attendance figures are presented to the Governing Body on a termly basis.